



Explanation of the Hadeeth, “Shayateen are Locked Up”

Compiled by: Abul Hasan Maalik Al Akhdar

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Messenger of Allaah sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam said, “When Ramadaan begins, the gates of the heavens are opened, and the gates of the hell fire are closed, and the Shayateen are locked up.”

Many ask, “If the Shayateen are locked up then why does evil and sin still occur?” Firstly, this hadeeth is authentic; Imaam Al-Bukhaaree has collected in his Saheeh in the Book of Fasting¹, and Imaam Muslim has collected in his Saheeh, also in the Book of Fasting², and Imaam An-Nisaa’ee has collected it in his Sunan in the Book of Fasting³, and Imaam Ahmad has collected it in his Musnad⁴.

Ibn Hajr rahimahullah says in the explanation of this Hadeeth in Fathul-Baaree⁵, “And the *Shayateen* are locked up’, Al-Haleemee said: ‘It is possible that what is intended by the *Shayateen* are those from amongst them who eavesdrop (on the revelation), and that their being locked up occurs in the nights (of Ramadan), not in its days, because they were forbidden from eavesdropping at the time of the revelation of the Qur’aan, so they were locked up as an additional measure for the protection (of the revelation), and it is possible that what is intended is that the *Shayateen* are not as determined to tempt the Muslims as they are able to outside of it (i.e. Ramadaan), because of them (the Muslims) being busy with fasting which suppresses the desires, and the recitation of the Qur’aan, and the remembrance (of Allaah).’ And others have said: ‘What is intended by *Shayateen* here is *some* of them, and they are the evil ones from amongst them...”

Then Ibn Hajr rahimahullah goes on to quote the statement of Iyaad: ... “And it is possible that it is alluding to the abundance of reward and forgiveness (in Ramadaan), and that the temptation of the *Shayateen* is decreased so they become *as if* they are locked up’. He (Iyaad) says: ‘And what supports this second possibility is his statement in the narration of Yunus on the authority of Ibn Shihaab in Saheeh Muslim, ‘the gates of the mercy are opened’ and it is possible that the opening of the gates of paradise means what Allah has opened for His

¹ Hadeeth Number 1899

² Hadeeth Number 2492-2493

³ Hadeeth Number 2104-2106

⁴ V2 P.281

⁵ V.4 P.706, 707]:

worshippers from acts of obedience, and these are the reasons for entering paradise, and the closing of the gates of the Hell-Fire means diversion from the desire to commit sins which leads the sinner to the Hell-Fire, and the locking up of the devils means the weakening of their ability to tempt, and beautify desires.”

He (Ibn Hajar rahimahullah) goes on to quote Al-Qurtubee rahimahullah when he says: “If it is asked how do we see so much evil and sin occurring in Ramadaan; if the *Shayaateen* are locked up why does this occur? The answer to this is that few of those who fast do so in a manner that upholds its conditions, or what is intended is *some* of the *Shayaateen*, and they are the evil ones from among them *not all of them* as has preceded in some of the narrations, or what is intended is the *reduction* of evil in it (Ramadaan) and this can be felt, for indeed this (evil) occurs less in it than outside of it. At the same time the locking up of all of the devils would not necessitate that evil and sin would not occur because there are other reasons for this besides the *Shayaateen*, like evil natures, wicked customs, and the *Shayaateen* from the humans.” And others have said, “The locking up of the *Shayaateen* in Ramadaan points to the removal of the person’s excuse, it is as if it is said to him, “The *Shayaateen* have been restrained so do not use them as an excuse for the abandonment of acts of obedience or the committing of sin.” [End of the quote from Ibn Hajr]

Imaam An-Nawawee rahimahullah says in the explanation of Saheeh Muslim⁶, “...the gates of paradise are opened and the gates of the Hell-Fire are closed and the *Shayaateen* are locked up.’ Al-Qaadee Iyaad says: ‘It is possible that this is literal, and that the opening of the gates of paradise, the closing of the gates of the Hell-Fire, and the locking up of the *Shayaateen*, are signs of entering Ramadaan and magnification of its sanctity, and that they (the *Shayaateen*) are locked up to prevent them from harming the believers and inciting them.’ And he said: ‘And it is possible that what is intended is a figurative meaning, and that it means an abundance of reward and forgiveness, and that the temptation and harm of *Shayaateen* is decreased so they become as if they are locked up, and that they are locked away from some things as opposed to others, and some people as opposed to others...”

⁶ [7/186-187]